DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 329 094 EC 300 090

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TITLE Bilingual Learning Disability Services in Illinois--A Myth?: A Look at Policy.
PUB DATE Oct 90
NOTE 42p.; Paper presented at the Council for Exceptional Children Symposium on Culturally Diverse Exceptional Children (Albuquerque, NM, October 18-20, 1990).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Bilingual Education; Cultural Differences; Educational Diagnosis; Educational Discrimination; Educational Policy; Educational Practices; Elementary Secondary Education; *Handicap Identification; Hispanic Americans; Incidence; Language Handicaps; *Learning Disabilities; Limited English Speaking; Program Implementation; State Programs; *State Standards; Student Placement
IDENTIFIERS Chicago Public Schools IL; *Illinois

ABSTRACT

This paper reviews statutes and recommended practices established by the Illinois State Board of Education for the identification of learning disabilities (LD) in culturally and linguistically diverse exceptional (CLDE) students, and reports the findings of a survey on LD bilingual services provided to Hispanic students in the Chicago (Illinois) Public Schools and surrounding districts. Such assessment variables as discrepancy criteria, processing criteria, and sociocultural factors are considered. The paper discusses the prevalence of Hispanic students enrolled in bilingual special education and possible factors impacting on their level of representation. A survey of 20 Chicago and area public schools, with approximately a 50% return rate, collected data on the types of services provided to CLDE students in LD. The study focused on types of programs, length of existence of the programs, numbers of students enrolled, professionals involved in the utilization of standardized tests for LD identification, criteria utilized for LD identification, instruments utilized for language proficiency evaluations, instruments and procedures utilized for educational assessments, and instructional materials utilized for the instruction of academic subjects. The paper concludes that state-mandated nondiscriminatory assessment and placement procedures are not being exercised, and that program availability appears to be the determinant factor in student placement. (Approximately 75 references) (JDD)

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BILINGUAL LEARNING DISABILITY SERVICES IN ILLINOIS-A MYTH?: A LOOK AT POLICY

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October, 1990

This paper was developed with research time granted by Illinois State University. However, no official endorsement is inferred. The paper was presented at the Cultural Diversity Symposium by the Council of Exception Children in Alburquerque, New Mexico.

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BILINGUAL LEARNING DISABILITY SERVICES IN ILLINOIS-A MYTH?: A LOOK AT POLICY

Introduction

The purpose of this article is: 1) to provide an analytical review of the various statutes and recommended practices established by the Illinois State Board of Education for the identification of learning disabilities (LD) with language minority students whose home languages include languages other than English, and 2) to report the findings of a survey which collected data on factors related to the LD bilingual services provided to Hispanic students in the Chicago Public Schools and surrounding districts. Throughout the article, the terms "culturally and linguistically diverse exceptional" (CLDE) students will be used interchangeably with language "minority students."

Background of the Problem

In order to better understand the myth of bilingual learning disabilities services in Illinois as they relate to CLDE students, one must have a working knowledge of of the general legal aspects related to the issue. Two pieces of legislation cited as Acts protecting the constitutional rights of all children with disabilities were the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (1975), and the Rehabilitation Act (1973). Barbacovi and Clelland (1985) explained that a lawsuit may be initiated because of a violation of a handicapped person's constitutional rights as set forth in the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments of the United States Constitution. Bilingual special researchers such as Bransford and Baca (1982), Vasquez Nuttall, Madeiros Landurand and Goldman (1984) provided the legal framework for Bilingual Special Education by establishing the relationship of the former Acts with the passage of the Bilingual Education Act (1968), the Supreme Court decision in the Lau v. Nichols (1974) case, and related litigation

challenging the issue of identification and placement of CLDE students. The application of the concept for the provision of "free, appropriate, public education for all children" includes the protection of the rights of language minority students to linguistically approriate services in the area of assessment and placement. The decision of Dyrcia S. et al. v. Board of Education of the City of New York, et al (1979) and a more recent Due Process Case, Defendant vs. Chicago Public Schools (1988) which in conjuction with other complaints triggered the investigation in the Chicago Public School system (CPS) by the United States Office of Civil Rights (OCR) at Chicago in 1988. It was found that the CPSs was out of compliance in the type of speech and language service being provided to the Hispanic students of limited-English proficiency. The services were delivered in English only which violated the students' rights to a free and appropriate public education. Assaf Keller (1986) cited the Plan for the Implementation of the Provision of Title VI of Civil Rights Act of 1964 to point out the critical need to develop bilingual special education programs as exceptional children were included as having the right to linguistically appropriate instruction. The plan reads as follows:

> Instructional programs for students from homes where a language other than English is spoken shall be developed and implemented. These will include bilingual education programs, special education programs and supplemental education services as indicated through student assessment. (p.71)

Although the Plan had been in place, appropriate services for the CLDE students appeared not to be within expectations according to the investigation conducted in 1980 by the United States Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR) and the results of the study conducted by Designs for Change (1982).

A Look at Procedures for the Identification of LD: Implications with Learning Minority Students

A Controversy over the LD Definition

Nationwide in the past decade, the enrollment of students identified as learning disabled (LD) has considerably risen according to statistics provided by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs (1987) showing an enrollment of population of 3.03% in 1980 to 4.80% in 1987. One of the possible factors for the unexpected increase in the population may be the language of the definition for LD which was adopted by the Federal Government in 1977 with the purpose of providing a justification for eligibility of services. The definition reads as follows:

> Specific learning disability means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which disorder may manifest itself in imperfect ability to listen, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations. The term includes such conditions as perceptual handicaps, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. The term does not include children who have learning problems which are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor handicaps, of mental retardation, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantages. (Federal Register, 1977)

The identification of a specific learning disability following the Federal Definition has been a challenge for the states. Heward and Orlansky (1988) reported, that in operationalizing the definition, most states and school districts require that three criteria be met. These criteria are: 1) a discrepancy between the child's potential and actual achievement, 2) an exclusion criterion which excludes those difficulites in learning that can be explained by general mental retardation, auditory or visual impairment, emotional

disturbance, or lack of opportunity to learn, and 3) the special education criterion which is a statement regarding the child's needs for specialized methods of instruction in order to benefit from a free, appropriate, and public education. Brulle and Ivarie (1988) reviewed the studies published by Berdine and Blackhurst (1985) which reported that 44% of the states are now using the 1977 Federal definition without modification, while an additional 18% are using it with slight variation; 24 % of the states use other definitions; and 4% do not use an LD definition at all. Twelve years after the approval of the Federal definition for LD, Lerner (1988) stated that the Association for Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities (ACLD, 1985) formulated its own definition to highlight the social problems found in many children and the lifelong nature of the condition. Similarly, Newcomer (1989) described the new definition for LD offered by the National Joint Committee on Learning Diabilities (NJCLD, 1987) which is the umbrella of seven different organizations, to include social skills deficits as a primary learning disability. In sum, it has been established that there are controversies among theorists and organizations regarding the definition for the identification of a specific LD.

A Look at Policy for Assessment of Language Minority Students in Illinois:

Is thre a Disparity between Policy and Practice?

Local education agencies (LEAs) are faced with the burden of the provision of appropriate services in all phases of special education with CLDE students. The task is compounded when attempting to comply with the mandates specially in the area of Learning Disabilities due to the inconsistencies of the definition and to difficulties encountered in the assessment process. An examination of the policy and procedures utilized with Hispanic students in Illinois will begin to shed some light into the problem.

Nondiscriminatory procedures in Illinois in relationship to language proficiency and achievement tests as they apply to the placement of LD Hispanic students were researched by Assaf Keller (1986). To explore the concept of who should be the implementors of the case study (professionals involved in the evaluative process to determine elibility for special education) the writer made references to one of the statutes as follows: "For purposes of determining eligibility of children, the State Board of Education shall include in the rules definitions of case study , staff conference, individualized educational program, and qualified specialists appropriate to each category of handicapped children as defined in this Article." (An Act to Amend Section 14-8.02 of the School Code, January, 1985, p.3)

In Illinois, it is required for LEAs to provide an educational assessment. The educational assessment as a component of the case study provides additional data at the case conference which is the meeting held to discuss the interpretation of the evaluations to decide eligibility for services and recommend appropriate placement. At the case conference, the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP), is completed by the professionals who collected data on the students' performance, the parents (or legal guardian), and the teacher. The IEP includes a summary of the evaluations and the instructional goals and objectives to meet the child's identified needs through the assessment process. The existence practice at the case conference is to accept the educational assessments of CLDE students implemented by the non-bilingual/bicultural LD specialists at the local school. The outcome is a performance profile through the utilization of standardized achievement instruments that are mostly normed on non-minority groups. Such a procedure violates the requirements for nondiscriminatory assessment procedures as

specified in the following quote:

> No child who comes from a home in which a language other than English is the principal language used may be assigned to any class or program under this Article until he has been given tests in the principal language used in his home reasonably related to his cultural environment. All testing and evaluation materials and procedures utilized for evaluation and placement shall not be racially or culturally discriminatory. (An Act to Amend Section 14-8.02 of the School Code, January, 1985.

Inherent in this statement is the clarification that the existent practices of conducting educational assessment via LD monolingual specialists violate the students' rights because: 1) they are not able to provide for the inclusion of native language or language use patterns of the child to ascertain the students' true needs, and 2) they include standardized evaluation materials that are for the most part racially or culturally discriminatory. Another statute establishing policy for the utilization of native language in the assessment process has been the Illinois State Board of Education Administrative Bulletin (1985). It reads as follows:

> ...When the language-use pattern involves two or more languages, the child must be evaluated in each of his or herlanguages. The personnel conducting components of the case study must be properly certificated to complete the evaluations and demonstrate competencies in and knowledge of the language and culture of the child. A case study must be comprehensive in scope to entail all of the components delineated in 23 Ill. Adm Code. 226.535 (p.3).

The paragraph's language clearly indicates that all components, not just the psychological, must be implemented through personnel properly certificated. However, the

written practice is in disparity with the actual practice in Illinois. It has been established that in Illinois, LEAs, carry the burden of including linguistically and culturally appropriate assessment procedures through appropriately certificated personnel participating in the case study process. The rationale for nondiscriminatory educational assessments as an essential element in the identification of LD diagnosis is further explained in the following section.

State Board of Education Agencies throughout the nation exercise the role of leadership in policy development and monitoring of LEAs for complying with the established mandates. Hence, in Illinois, the Illinois State Board of Education Administrative Bulletin #15: Multidisciplinary Conference Summary Report (1986) disseminated procedural guidelines in the identification and placement components. The three main areas stressed were a) the Federal Definition b) the stipulation of the educational assessment as part of the case study evaluation, and c) the meaning of consensus of opinion at the multidisciplinary conference for placement purposes. In sum, the educational assessment and the concensus of opinion factors were included as vehicles to facilitate the implementation of the exclusionary discrepancy criterion components of the definition. The need for the educational assessment as a part of the case study (in the eligibility decision for a learning disability) is to provide at the case conference supplemental data collected by a person other than the psychologist. It is this writer's belief that the educational assessment should be mandated to be implemented following a different approach in the assessment process especially when investigating the needs of the CLDE students. The Functional Assessment Model posed by Maheady (1984) stresses the utilization of collection of data through informal techniques via the instructional process and in the natural learning environment as an alternative approach

to standardized tests. In light of such a recommendation, it would be most logical for the LD specialists implementing educational assessments to embrace a different approach other than the one already followed by the psychologist in the endeavor of data collection to justify the exclusion clause and discrepancy criteria in the process of identification of LD, and even more so with language minority students.

As previously stated, the ISBE Administrative Bulletin #15 setting policy in the area of case conferences to decide on eligibility for LD programs, made a reference to the consensus of opinion approach to be implemented in cases of disagreement among the professionals that were involved in the case study. The guidelines did not specify the exact number of participants voting to meet the policy of concensus. The practice in the field is that over 50% means majority of opinion or consensus to agree on the eligibility decision for LD. The professionals not in agreement have the right to document a "dissention opinion" documenting the rationale for disagreement on the issues of eligibility and/or recommended placement. The reader is now invited to reflect on the implications of this mandate to rationalize an answer for the following question: Is the consensus of opinion an equitable policy as it applies to the make up of teams of professionals attending the case conferences of CLDE students? At present in Illinois, only a dismal number of LEAs have in place bilingual/bicultural learning disabilities specialists to conduct the educational assessment of CLDE students and quite often the only bilingual/bicultural specialist providing input at the team conference is the bilingual psychologist.

Recommended Illinois State Board of Education Criteria for Eligibility in Learning Disabilities Programs

Continuing with the look at policy in the discussion of the myth of bilingual learning disabilities in Illinois, the discussion now focuses on the recent manual published by ISBE (1990) providing leadership in the area of LD. It is entitled, "Recommended procedures for the identification of a specific learning disability" (ISBE, 1990). The manual was the end result of a Task Force that met to develop the recommended procedures with the goal to adopt uniform guidelines in such a challenging task of the identification of a specific LD. It was recommended that in the justification for the provision of LD services in Illinois, LEAs should 1) document the specific learning disability by identifying the average ability of the students through standardized test, 2) document the student's significant discrepancy between the ability and the achievement, 3) document the application of the exclusion critera, and 4) document the need for learning disabilities services which can not be corrected without special education and related services. An examination of the document was pursued to analyze the implications in regards to CLDE students. This writer revealed the items listed below as greatly impacting on language minority students.

Hispanic Representation in Task Force

Out of twenty seven members comprising the Task Force, only one individual was bilingual bicultural. Given the previous discussions regarding the historical controversies surrounding the myth of the identification of LD with the population at large, it appears unjustifiable to place such a burden on one person with limited diagnostic experience to solve the myth of identification of learning disabilities with CLDE students.

Discrepancy Criteria

Over two thirds of the manual was dedicated to the inclusion of statistical tables displaying the data for the documentation of a discrepancy between aptitude and achievement in the identification of a severe learning disability. The tables included scores following Reynolds' (1985) statistical approach in computing discrepancies. The standardized tests included were:

a. Woodcock Johnson Psychoeducational Battery (1981)

b. Assessment Battery for Children (1985)

c. Peabody Picture Vocabulary (1965)

d. Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (1979)

e. Wechsler Preschool Primary Scale of Intelligence (1967)

f. Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-Revised (1955)

g. Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale (1973)

The recommendation impacted on LEAs to develop procedures at the district level. For example, the CPS system disseminated the Learning Disabilities Procedural Handbook (1990). It states, "Intellectual potential should be determined by standardized test of intelligence interpreted by the psychologist."(p.1) The manual then reinforces the utilization of the discrepancy criteria to document the learning disability which cannot be corrected without special education and related services. Other surrounding districts, Rockford and Waukegan, also disseminated guidelines for the identification of a learning disability to include the "Discrepancy Criterion" (ICEC presentation, 1990). The literature indicates that there is disagreement in the application of measuring the discrepancy criteria between aptitude and achievement through standardized tests for the diagnosis of learning disabilities. Berk (1984) evaluated the procedures utilized in finding a

discrepancy. The writer explained, "None of the discrepancy procedures takes into account the unreliability of each test. Not only can unreliable test create discrepancies when there are none, and vice versa, but they can change the direction of the discrepancy (e.g., a child identified as learning disabled based on the discrepancy between two unreliable tests may, in fact, be an underachiever)" (p.264). This problem was also observed in a similar light by Reynold (1985), a noted advocate of the discrepancy criteria for the identification of LD. The writer made references to the possible over or under identification of LD students. Reynold quoted Chalfant 1984) to speculate the problem as follows:

> Both under- and over- identification of learning disabled (LD) children create significant problems. Undercounting deprives LD children of special services to which they are entitled; overcounting results in the inappropriate placement of students who are not handicapped, loss of valuable staff time, and increased expense of operational programs. (p. 38)

Brown and Bryant (1985), as column editors of Reynold's (1985) article addressed the potential problems with the utilization of the discrepancy criteria by noting that it is entirely possible that true LD students will, in fact, be eliminated from further diagnostic consideration as a result of discrepancy analysis because LD students evidence language problems and that difficulties in reading, writing, speaking, or listening affect their test performance due to most test formats are highly loaded with these language skills. The writer also added that an LD student is likely to score as poorly on language-loaded intelligence tests as on language-loaded achievement tests. Hence, no severe aptitude-achievement discrepancy will be found which eliminates the students from consideration for LD eligibility due to the tests that are administered. More recently, an

analysis was implemented to evaluate the nine methods available to be utilized in finding such a discrepancy. Bennett and Clarizio (1988) concluded that errors of measurement are still present even when the Reynolds procedure is applied. At this point, it is essential to note that if there is disagreement with the application of the discrepancy criteria in the diagnostic process of LD with the population at large, the proponderanse of the problem is intensified when attempting to apply the concept with CLDE students. On this basis, it is anticipated that the recommended discrepancy criteria will exclude the true learning disabled CLDE students from eligibility of services, while possibly misidentifying as LD those CLDE students that demonstrate a discrepancy due to factors other than true LD needs.

Processing Criteria

In pursuing the discussion of the manual, Recommended Procedures for the Identification of a Specific Learning Disability (ISBE, 1990), the processing criteria were reviewed in relationship to the implications with language minority students in need of LD services. It was noted earlier that the processing criteria is one part of the components in the process. However, the manual superficially notes the inclusion of the processing criteria as an additional component in the process of the identification of a specific LD. It is suspected that LEAs may disregard this area even though it is becoming a promising approach in the literature. The information-processing framework was identified as a possible model in the LD diagnosis task. Swanson (1988) described a multidirectional model as a complement to current assessment practices. The model is organized into five assessment planes with different component levels for each plane focusing on problem-solving strategies to be ascertained through the talking aloud

approach. The goal is the investigation of the "how" of intellectual performance. The process assessment was also pointed as a viable component in the diagnosis of LD with CLDE students by (Palomo, 1988). The writer stressed that the approach brings to the surface linguistic, social, and cultural variables through problem-solving situations when properly administered by a bilingual psychologist. It is then advisable to assure that the educational diagnostic process as one of the components in the identification of a specific LD includes this approach. The approach requires the intervention of a bilingual and bicultural assessor. Unforturnately, the manual did not explore this area as a promising practice with CLDE students.

Socio-cultural Factors

The manual included a survey to rule out environmental, economical, or social factors (see Appendix A) as variables responsible for the lack of academic progress. The only statement included as instructions and/or interpretations read as follows: "A high score on this checklist suggests that there are several factors related to the student's background that are interfering with his/her academic progress. A child whose severe discrepancy between ability and achievement is primarily the result of the intervening factors above should not be identified as having a Specific Learning Disability" (p. 34-35). It is apparent that the intention of the survey was to prevent erroneous placement of language minority students in LD programs as a result of linguistic and cultural factors that may interfere in the acquisition of academic achievement. However, there are some true LD students who may become excluded from the provision of the service based on the administration and interpretation of the survey due to two factors: 1) the subjective judgment of the data collector, and 2) the membership of case study teams

which include a bilingual psychologist only for students enrolled in the bilingual program. In summary, although the survey's purpose was to rule out environmental disadvantages, it did not delineate the "who" for implementation and interpretation in the case of CLDE students whose needs must be ascertained through the utilization of qualified personnel.

A LOOK AT LEARNING DISABILITIES SERVICES

The purpose of this section is to: 1) present an analytical discussion on the possible factors impacting on the representation of Hispanic students enrolled in bilingual special education at the CPSs, 2) discuss the prevalence of data of these students in LD bilingual special education programs, and 3) report some preliminary findings related to LD bilingual services in Chicago and surrounding districts.

Factors Impacting on the Representation of Hispanic Students in Bilingual special Education Programs at the Chicago Public Schools

The prevalence of CLDE students in special education was explained in detail by Dew (1984). The writer referenced the United States Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (1980) investigation, and the report by Designs for Change (1982) finding a disproportionate representation of CLDEs students in special education. Ethnic representation in special education was available. However, representation of population in special education by ethnic background and level of English proficiency was not collected. One may not be alerted to the preceding statement as it is not a hidden fact that the evaluation of language proficiency is an intricate area which is still being researched in depth by known scholars (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981;

Krashen,1982). The preponderance of the issue is magnified when language proficiency is investigated with CLDE students. For reviews in this area see (Cummins, 1979; Omark & Erickson, 1983; Assaf Keller, 1986).

With this thought in mind, the discussion will center around the factors impacting on the education of the Hispanic students participating in special education programs in the Chicago Public School (CPS) system. To begin, between the period of 1986 and 1988, the CPS was impacted by two major events causing the restructuring of the administrative system in Regular Education and Special Education. The Illinois State Board of Education: Education Package (1985) was disseminated to LEAs as a guideline in School Reform, and as a result of the P.L. 851418 (1985) which was signed into law. Additionaly, as a result of the investigation by the OCR (1988), the CPS system and the ISBE entered a Settlement Agreement as specified in the Administrative Proceedings in the United States Department of Education (1985). An evaluation of the document revealed that the Organizational Chart of the Department of Special Education and Pupil Support services as displayed in Figure 1 did not include a Bilingual Special Education Department to be responsible for the delivery of quality services with CLDE students.

Insert Figure 1 about here

To investigate the possible factors impacting on the disproportional representation of language minority students in some special education areas, a Task Force was formed by the CPSs. The Chicago Public Schools Racial and Ethnic Survey (1988-1989) collects information for the Department of Multicultural Education with the purpose of tracking

the services provided to language minority students. Data for three differenct factors were reported: a) Hispanic special education students inclusive of 1989-90 year (Figure 2); b) Bilingual special education models (Figure 3), and c) Variables affecting bilingual services for Special Education Hispanic Students (Figure 4).

Several instructional models have been discussed in the literature as viable models for the provision of services with CLDE students. For detailed review of the conceptual framework of the models see Ambert and Dew (1982). The Illinois State Board of Education Administrative Bulletin: Procedural Safeguards in the Provision of Services with limited-English proficient students (1985) recommended the coordinated services model as the recommended model to be implemented with LEP Sstudents. In 1986, the CPSs selected the models to meet the guidelines prescribed in the Plan to Implement the Civil Rights Act 1964. Administratively, these models were disseminated in the LEAs not as mandated models but only as "recommended". Recently, in the manual entitled "Procedural Handbook for Learning Disabilities in the Chicago Public Schools (1980), the same models were again described as recommended for the provision of services with LEP students. Figure 2 shows the number of Hispanic LEP students placed in each of the instructional models. Although, the models were developed in order of preference, the Teacher-Aide Model which was listed as the least preferable, has emerged in actual practice as the most frequently utilized model by administrators based on LEAs' availability of a bilingual special education teacher. From the seven hundred forty-five LEP Hispanic students, 190 are being provided bilingual special education services via a Teacher-Aide.

Insert Figure 2 about here

Figure 3 provides the breakdown of 8,507 Hispanic students in Special Education. Out of this number, 3,256 Hispanics have never been given the Functional Language Assessment Scale (1981) which is the test that identifies degree of English proficiency (for a review on this test and its usefulness with Hispanic LD students see Assaf Keller, 1986). Another interesting observation is the comparison of the number of students identified as tested bilingually (total 5,251) when compared to actual number and the number of students as LEP in special education (746) from Figure 2.

Insert Figure 3 about here

The Chicago Public Schools Bilingual Data Form (1988) is a survey utilized for data collection on services provided to language minority students within the regular bilingual program. Some potential factors affecting bilingual services for special education Hispanic students were identified and reported in Figure 3. The data show that the 3,256 students identified above may be eligible for bilingual special education services as these students were not given a language proficiency. Additionally, 176 students whose parents refused the bilingual service may also be in need of such a service. The observation here is that the specialized services to be provided within special education for CLDE students must include the linguistic and cultural needs. In accordance with P.L. 94-142 (1975) neither does the system nor the parents have the right to wave the rights to an appropriate, public education of a child with handicaps. However, given these data, one may conclude that in the case of the Hispanic child with limited English proficiency needs, the system falls short in the protection of their rights.

Prevalence Data of Hispanics Students Enrolled in Learning Disabilities Programs at the Chicago Public School System

To investigate the proportion of Hispanic students participating in learning disabilities classes, an analysis of the data compiled for the Chicago Public Schools: Handicap Count by Ethnic Breakdown, (1989) survey revealed the information displayed in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

The proportion of Hispanic students participating in moderate learning disabilities MLD classes (resource services) is 20%, while the proportion of Hispanic students served in severe learning disabilities (SLD) services (instructional placement) is 24.7. When comparing the proportion of the total number of Hispanic students in special education (18.7%) to the proportion of the same students in MLD and SLD, a slight overrepresentation was detected. However, the inverse was observed when the same data were compared to the General Education enrollment showing an underrepresentation of 6% in MLD programs, and approximately 1.5% in SLD programs. The white population was overrepresented in both MLD and SLD programs when compared to the proportion of white students in the General School population. In fact, the enrollment of white students showed an over-representation of 6% in the area of MLD and 5.% in SLD programs. In the SLD category, the black population of students was slightly underrepresented (about 1.8% difference) while it showed a slight overrepresentation in the MLD programs.

Although in some states minority students are significantly overrepresented in learning disabilities programs, it appears that in Illinois this is not the case. It was found that the

white population continues to be overrepresented signicantly higher than the Hispanics and blacks. It is evident that if over three thousand Hispanic students enrolled in special education were never given a language proficiency evaluation one may question the actual need for special education placement and/or the appropriateness of the individualized educational plans (IEPs) given the special needs of the CLDE students. The rights to linguistically and culturally appropriate instruction have not been acknowledged in the special education process within the CPSs. In fact the Special Education Division of the CPS does not have in place a survey form to collect information on CLDE students' levels of English proficiency. There is a definite disparity between the existent policy and actual practice of procedures at the LEAs' level regarding the mandates for the identification of linguistic needs of students prior to and during the case study process.

The Myth: A Teacher Shortage or Data Shortage?

In the past decade institutions of higher education (IHEs) in Ilinois has shown interest in training of specialists to supply the demand in bilingual special education. The United States Office of Education (USOE) has provided federal monies as incentives for the training to IHEs in Illinois. Some of these institutions are: DePaul University, University of Illinois at Chicago, Northeastern Illinois University, Illinois State University and Southern Illinois University at Carbondale have existent programs (or had programs in the past) to supply the teacher demand. However, the documentaion of the need for bilingual teachers is a problem in Illinois.

On an annual basis, the Illinois State Board of Education collects statistics submitted by LEAs reporting the number of students identified, and the number of teachers available to supply the demand. The results for the 1988-1989 year were reported in the form

entitled, Illinois State Board of Education: Teacher Supply and Demand Information. The examination of the form revealed that there is no data collection on bilingual special education needs. Hence, the CPS system does not have to report a teacher shortage in this area since the ISBE agency does not request the information. Meanwhile, students' linguistic needs are not being evaluated (see Figure 3 above) so that a shortage is not documented in the area of bilingual special education.

SURVEY REPORT: LEARNING DISABILITY SERVICES IN CHICAGO AND SURROUNDING DISTRICTS

The discussion on the myth of LD bilingual services in Illinois demanded an inquiry ascertaining what is actually taking place at the LEAs' level where there are some LD bilingual units in existence. A prototype survey was developed to collect data on the types of services provided to CLDE students in LD. The selection of the schools in the CPS system was based on sites reported by the Central Services Department as having a bilingual learning disabilities program available. The survey was mailed to fifteen Chicago public schools and five different districts in Illinois: Waukegan, Rockford, Elgin, Palatine, Joliet, and Aurora. The survey collected data in the following variables:

A. Types of programs

B. Length of existence of the programs

C. Number and breakdown of students enrolled in LD programs

D. Professionals involved utilizing standardized tests for the identification of LD

E. Criteria utilized for the identification of LD

F. Instruments utilized for the language proficiency evaluations

F. Instruments and procedures utilized for the educational assessments

G. Instructional materials utilized for the instruction of academic subjects.

A 50% return of the survey from the CPS schools was obtained. From the 5 surveyed surrounding districts, only Waukegan and Rockford responded. In fact, one other district returned the survey with the statement "we do not provide this service in special education." The following summary provides a preliminary picture of the LD services provided to CLDE students within some LEAs in Illinois.

Types of Programs and Length of Existence of the Programs

For the most part CLDE students were placed in either SLD or MLD programs. There were no itinerant services (LD bilingual teacher provides some service to the students within the General Education placement) reported by the CPS nor other districts. The Pilsen Academy in Chicago stated as having the SLD bilingual class for the past 12 years which was the same length of existence of the MLD bilingual class at the Whittier School in Chicago. Waukegan identified as having resource and SLD programs for the past 12 years via the integrated model (one teacher with bilingual and LD certificates). Similarly, Rockford's program has been in existence for the past 12 years but utilizing the coordinated model (students are serviced part of the time by the LD monolingual teacher and part of the time by a bilingual non-special education teacher).

Number and Ethnic Breakdown of Students Enrolled in the Program

As priorly stated, since only two out of the five surrounding districts responded, the data here are not intended to be interpreted as total numbers in Illinois. Waukegan reported one hundred seventy two students of Hispanic background enrolled in the LD program but no breakdown by ethnicity was provided. Rockford reported 165 students and most of whom as first generation Mexican students. From the schools in the CPS system, there were two MLD classes serving a total of twenty students in each unit and 5 SLD classes with an enrollment of 10 students per site.

Professionals Involved in the Utilization of Standardized Tests and Criteria for Identification of a Specific Learning Disability

Waukegan and the LEAs in Chicago responded as utilizing a bilingual psychologist for the students in the Bilingual Program. Additionaly, in these districts the LD bilingual specialist conducts the educational assessment utilizing formal standardized tests and informal procedures to complement the investigation for the discrepancy criteria. In Rockford, LD diagnosis for bilingual children is conducted by the utilization of the diagnostician model.

Instruments Utilized for the Investigation of Language Proficiency and the Educational Assessment

The instruments identified most often for language proficiency evaluation were the DeAvila And Duncan Language Assesment Scale (1979) and the Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery (1984). Of the instruments utilized most often for the investigation or reading and math were the Brigance Test of Basic Skills (1984) and the Bateria Woodcock Psicoeducativa (1981).

Instructional Materials Utilized for Academic Subjects

More schools reported utilizing textbooks in Spanish than in English. The few schools that follow reading in native language identified four different series, Houghton Mifflin (1973), A Cada Paso (1978), and Santillana (1979). Most schools identified the use of textbooks in English to teach Math. Among the textbooks used more frequently were Addison Wesley (1989) and MacMillan (1985). All teachers reported the inclusion of teacher-made materials in native language and in English for some subjects in accordance to the linguistic needs.

Conclusions

The discussion around the myth of LD bilingual services for language minority students in Illinois, pointed to the mandates protecting the rights of the CLDE in the identification process and provision of services as well as the disparity between existent policies and actual practices.

CLDE students appeared in the literature as having the rights to a free and appropiate public education. State Board of Education mandates and policies designed for School Districts to follow and comply with the concept of nondiscriminatory procedures in the assessment and placement are not being exercised. The absence of this exercise has great implications on the identification of LD with language minority students. Because learning disability has emerged as an area of great concern, the identification of a specific learning disability within CLDE students must be dedicated special attention. The utilization of the Discrepancy criteria for the identification of LD with language minority students may present potential problems with true LD students whose intellectual performance on standarized tests may be confounded by the nature of the disability. It has been observed that, in Illinois, Hispanic students continue to be underrepresented in the MLD programs and proportionaly represented in SLD programs. This writer suspects that a trend is emerging in these types of placement in which there are more SLD bilingual teachers hired and less MLD bilingual teachers in position. It appears as if availability of a program is the determinant factor and not the least restrictive environment (LRE) concept as mandated in the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142, 197) which specified that to the maximum extent appropriate, handicpaped children should be educated with children who are not handicapped. It has been noted that under the LRE requirement each state and local education agency must enusre that a continuum of alternative placements are available to meet the needs of

handicapped children for special education and related services (Barbacovi and Clelland, 1985). Hence, the practice of placing students following the program availability option and not the LRE continuum, deprives CLDE of the rights to a free public and appropriate education. Similarily, the practice of placing language minority students in special education programs without the investigation of language proficiency needs also deprives these students from an appropriate education in the LRE. The litigated case in the Dyrcia v. Board of Education of New York (1982) decision addressed the bilingual needs of the student which were protected by the court in its decision.

Recommendations

1. Nondiscriminatory procedures in Illinois should be followed not only with students placed in bilingual programs but also with all language minority students whose language-use patterns at home, school, or in the neighborhood include a language other than English. The high number (three-thousand two-hundred fifty-two) of Hispanic students currently placed in special education that were never given a language proficiency is an evidence that there is disparity between policy and actual practice in the Chicago Public School system.
2. Monitoring teams for the ISBE must be inserviced and trained in ascertaining compliance at the LEAs' level regarding the evaluation of language proficiency and instructional needs of the CLDE students. One must question whether or not the checklist utilized by the compliance teams from the ISBE to monitor special programs, include the relevant items to investigate the linguistic factors of language minority students.
3. Inservice training to principals, counselors, and case study teams to raise the awareness of provision of services to CLDE students must include linguistically appropriate instruction. If a limited-English student is identified as LD, the

student continues to hold the right to meaningful instruction in order to benefit from a free, public, and approriate education.

4. Data collection procedures from the ISBE should include information on English proficiency levels in addition to the existent procedure of enrollment of special education students by ethnically background and handicapping condition. This information would eventually place LEAs in an accountable position of documenting the linguistic needs of CLDE students. In looking at policy, one may conclude that if the need for a service is not documented, then, there will not be a need to report a demand for teachers to supply the service. Hence, learning disabilities for services with CLDE students in Illinois will continue to be a myth in Illinois unless the disparity between policy and actual practice is firmly monitored by the policy makers.

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APPENDIX A

SOCIOCULTURAL FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENT'S SCHOOL PROGRESS

NAME OF STUDENT _____GRADE_____

HOME ADDRESS_____

SCHOOL_____TEACHER_____

DATE CHECKLIST COMPLETED _____

Check all factors that apply to the student. Use available records, interviews with parents and teachers, observations in the classroom, social adaptive scales, etc.

1. Environmental Factors:

a) _____ Late school entrance (e.g., started school after age 7)

b) _____ Limited experiential background (lack of opportunity to acquire basic learning skills, lack of exposure to school environments, lack of familiarity with instruments and materials used in standardized tests and in the classroom, lack of opportunities to interact with peers and adults)

c) _____ Irregular attendance (absent at least 25% of the time in a grading period for reasons other than verified personal illness)

d) _____ Transiency in elementary school years (at least three moves)

e) _____ Adaptation to a culture different from his/her native one is in process (e.g., student is from a foreign country or has moved from an isolated rural area to an urban city environment)

f) _____ Nonactive parent participation in school activities related to the student's education (e.g., parents do not attend school meetings, teacher-parent conferences, parents do not respond to correspondence from school)

2. Language factors:

g) _____ Lack of proficiency in English (as determined by the tests and procedures that the district's bilingual program uses to identify limited English proficiency students; including tests such as the Language Assessment Scale (DeAvila), Woodcock Language Assessment, Maculaitis Assessment Program, and judgment of the bilingual teachers)

h) _____ Lack of language development in native language (as determined by assessments and observations conducted by bilingual teachers and/or other bilingual professionals and interviews with parents)

i) _____ Insufficient exposure to the formal English language (e.g., English is not the language spoken at home, limited opportunities to interact with peers, lack of adequate supportive instructional services in school to facilitate the acquisition of English)

j) _____ Acquisition of basic oral language proficiency in English but inadequate formal or cognitive language proficiency in English (e.g., student lacks the literate language needed to profit from regular classroom instruction, such as a poor receptive English vocabulary as measured by the PPT, low scores on sub-tests of language assessment batteries measuring language production, vocabulary, and academic achievements in reading comprehension and written language)

3. Cultural Factors

k) _____ Limited experiences of social interaction with mainstream culture (student does not participate in school activities with mainstream peers, student does not participate in mainstream social organizations in the community such as after school programs, Boy's Clubs, etc.).

l) _____ Limited experiences which stimulate intellectual growth and fund of knowledge (limited exposure to: cultural activities such as visits to museums, zoos, experiences to develop art appreciation, interaction with adults and positive role models; members of immediate family are illiterate)

4. Economic Factors

m) _____ Participation in the district's Title I program
n) _____ Unemployed parents, low income family
o) _____ Physical environment of the home is characterized by limited facilities and space

_____
Total number of check marks

A high score on this checklist suggests that there are several factors related to the student's background that are interfering with his/her academic progress. A child whose severe discrepancy between ability and achievement is primarily

the result of the intervening factors indicated above should not be identified as having a Specific Learning Disability.

_____

Signature of Person Completing Form

From: Illinois State Board of Education (1990). Criteria for determining the existence of learning disabilty.

Table 1

ETHNIC REPRESENTATION OF STUDENT
IN LEARNING DISABILITIES

	MLD	SLD	Proportion Total SPED	Proportion C. Ed.
Hispanic	20%	24.7%	18.7%	26.1%
Blacks	60%	57%	62.7%	58.8%
White	18%	17.8%	17%	12%

Chicago Public Schools (1989) Handicapped Count by Ethnic Breakdown

FIGURE 1

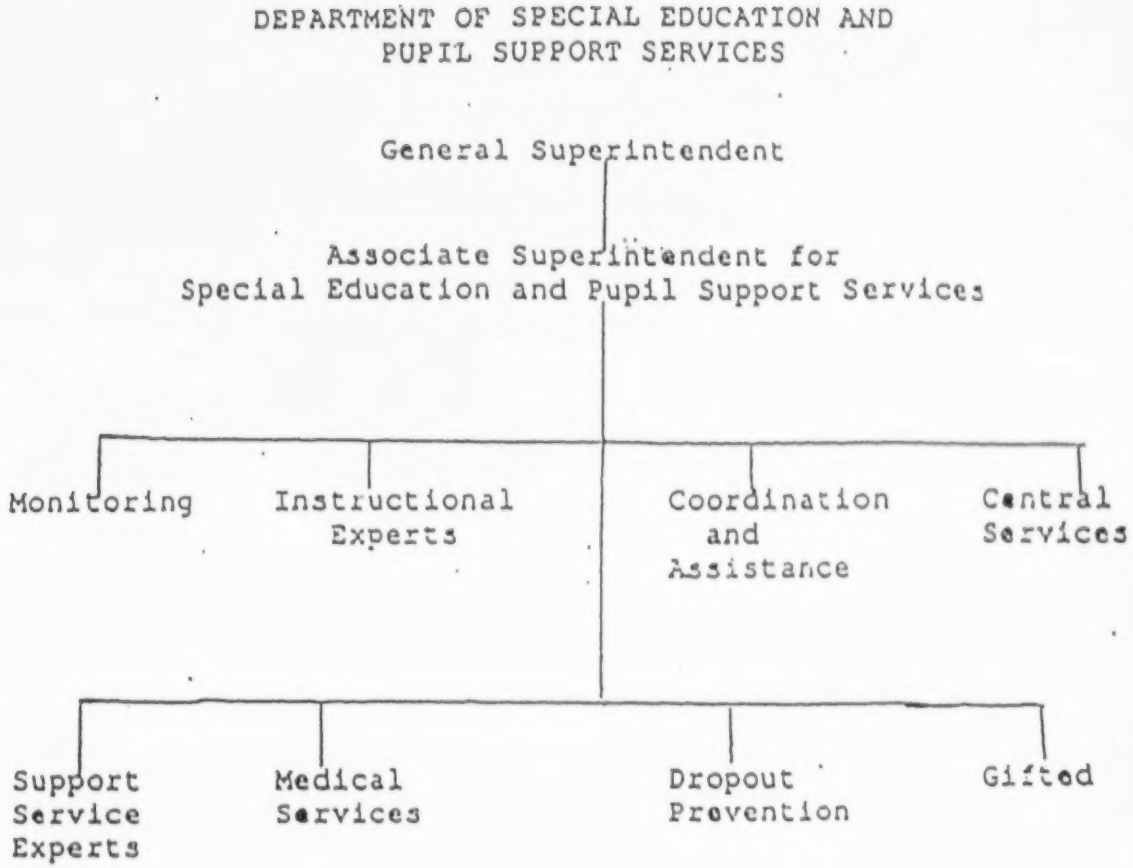

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FIGURE 2

BILINGUAL SPECIAL EDUCATION MODELS

1-5 REPORTED 1989 - 1990

MODEL	TOTAL STUDENTS
1 (Integrated Model)	246
2 (Co-ordinated Model)	134
3 (Team-Teaching)	36
4 (Team-Teaching Resource Students only)	139
5 (Teacher-Aide Model)	190
TOTAL	745

Chicago Public Schools: Racial and Ethnic Survey (1988-89) Department of Research and Evaluation

FIGURE 3

HISPANIC SPECIAL EDUCATION
STUDENTS INCLUSIVE OF
1989 - 90 SCHOOL YEAR

Hispanics Who Were Never Given the FLA		3,256
Hispanics Who Have Been Evaluated Bilingually At Some Point During Their School Enrollment		5,251
	Total	8,507
Total Number Of Hispanics Currently in General Special Education Programs	Total	7,217
Total Students with Models 0-5		922
Total Students For Which A Model Number Was Not Reported		368

Chicago Public Schools: Racial and Ethnic Survey (1988-89) Department of Research and Evaluation

FIGURE 4

VARIABLES AFFECTING BILINGUAL SERVICES FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION HISPANIC STUDENTS

I.	Not in Bilingual Special Education But May be Eligible		Total Students 3,256
II.	Limited English Proficient, But May or May Not Be Receiving Bilingual Services		368
	No Bilingual Special Education Model Reported		
III.	Limited English Proficient, But Not Receiving Bilingual Services		
	A. Exit Code 13	176	
	Parents Refused Bilingual Services		
	B. Exit Code 25	682	
	In Program More Than 3 years - Need Letter to continue		
	C. Bilingual Special Education	177	
	Model "0" Indicating No Bilingual Services Being Provided		

Chicago Public Schools: Racial and Ethnic Survey (1988-89) Department of Research and Evaluation